

Bensonville, July 26, 1848.

Dear Helen:

85 - A few minutes after I had forwarded my letters to you by Mr. Stephen, I received yours of Sunday last. I am induced to write thus early again, because from the description you give of the colored girl, who wishes to do your work, I am convinced that she will not answer your purpose. She is manifestly too young, too slender, and too inexperienced. ~~to your work~~ You need some one at least as strong as Hannah; and though this young girl may be very smart, and may think she can perform all that you must necessarily require of her, yet it is evident to me that she would become discouraged, or break down, in a short time. Besides, if she has been used principally to the taking care of children, I do not see how she can well understand the art of cooking. Of course, Mr. Taylor's testimony cannot avail aught, as he knows nothing about her. Perhaps, however, you have made a positive engagement with her; and, if so, then I suppose you must take her, "for better, for worse;" as she may happen to turn out.

As for Hannah, I pity her, and do not wonder that she is troubled at the thought of losing her place. You must make all due allowance for one in her situation, on the score of temper, and be careful to say or do nothing that shall excite her ill feelings. It is evident that she is attached to us, and would much rather live with us than with any other family. There is at least an equal chance that, if you lose her, you will get worse help. It is true, she lacks neatness, (and this is a serious deficit,) and is a very poor washer and ironer, (and this, too, is a great drawback,) but she is industrious, though not swift, kind, and ready to do any kind of work. She is also honest.

If, during your absence from the city, she can obtain a situation to her mind, let her do so; but, if not, perhaps you had better retain her — at least till after your accouchement — letting her understand, however, that, whenever you can find one who can better fill her place, you will be induced to make the change, after giving her due notice. For Ellen's sake, I feel anxious that Hannah should be satisfied that we take an interest in her welfare. As a stranger in a strange land, she is all the more to be tenderly regarded. I am sorry she is not all that we want, and all that is really desirable; but it will, doubtless, be extremely difficult to find a girl who, as a whole, will do better than herself at nine shillings a week.

I believe I requested you, in my last letter, to buy me a pair of thin pantaloons at Mr. Curtis's; but I wish to withdraw that request, as I shall be able to make my ermine ones answer my purpose; therefore, give yourself no trouble on that score. But I shall need the pantaloons I left in the closet — not the black ones, but of another color, and somewhat stout.

To-day, there is to be a free soil convention in Northampton, and several of us will go down this afternoon to judge of its character and spirit, — dispensing with our usual bath. The defection from the Taylor and Cass ranks, in this section of the State, appears to be considerable, and is every day increasing. It seems probable, now, that there will be no choice of electors in Massachusetts, by the people, at the November election. I long to see the day when the great issue with the Slave Power, of the immediate dissolution of the Union, will be made by all the free States; for then the conflict will be a short and decisive one, and liberty will triumph. The free soil movement inevitably leads to it, and hence I hail it as the beginning of the end.

Wednesday Evening.

George and William safely arrived this afternoon at 3 o'clock; though they took the train for Cabot, at Springfield, and had to wait some time at that place until the Northampton train came along. I got my friend Mr. Bradbury to go to the depot for them, as I did not like to leave the meeting. They immediately went on their way to Bensonville. They brought a letter from you, enclosing some money, and also one from my kind friend May, as well as a large bundle of newspapers, which I was very glad to receive. Mr. May thinks I had better relinquish my intention of receiving a bundle weekly to examine, lest it shall be a drawback upon my progress in the water cure; and he very considerately offers to make all necessary selections for the Liberator. But absence of newspapers will cause me more uneasiness of mind, than their examination will prove detrimental. Should I have a "crisis," however, I shall undoubtedly feel too weak, for the time being, to read much without injury; and in that case, I will duly notify friend Wallcut of the fact and not attempt the task.

As to the sheets, perhaps you had better wait till you come here before you purchase the cloth, or make any, as you will then know precisely the kind that are wanted. I suppose two more will answer. Fine ones are not required.

I hear from New York, that Mrs. Gay has presented her husband with a fine boy.

The daguerreotype likeness of dear little, charming, lovely, darling Fanny is greatly admired by all the ladies and gentlemen here, both for its execution and the beauty of the face. Mine is thought to be pretty good, but not entirely satisfactory. It is strange that neither nature nor art can succeed in getting a good likeness of me. Do not fail to bring our sainted Lizzie's with you.

Our kind friend Blanchard, I think, must have been disappointed that we did not take his house; and nothing but our peculiar situation at this time would have prevented our doing so. If he should call on you again, assure him that we should have been much pleased to have had him for a landlord, and are greatly obliged to him for his kindness and attention. I esteem highly